

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-09 ISO-00 FEA-01 ERDA-07 AID-05 CEA-01

CIAE-00 CIEP-02 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07 FPC-01 H-02

INR-07 INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04

USIA-15 SAM-01 OES-05 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 PA-02

PRS-01 /118 W

----- 077042

R 101902Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5518

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USMISSION OECD PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, EEC, UK, PFOR

SUBJECT: UK DEMAND FOR SEPARATE REPRESENTATION AT CONSUMER-PRODUCER CONFERENCE: BRITISH PRESS REACTION

1. MEDIA REAATION TO FONSEC CALLAGHAN'S INSISTENCE ON SEPARATE REPRESENTATION FOR UK AT CONSUMER-PRODUCER CONFERENCE WAS WIDESPREAD, FRONT-PAGE BUT SHORT-LIVED. ONLY QUALITY PRESS SUCH AS FINANCIAL TIMES AND TIMES OF LONDON CARRIED EDITORIAL COMMENT.

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2. OCTOBER 8 TIMES EDITORIAL "A SEPARATE BRITISH

INTEREST" FOUND TONE OF CALLAGHAN REMARKS HARSH BUT NECESSARY TO REMOVE ANY DOUBTS ABOUT THE BRITISH ATTITUDE. FOLSEC WAS RIGHT BECAUSE ON ENERGY QUESTION UK HAS FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT INTERESTS FROM REST OF EC. COMMUNITY POSITION SUITED TO OTHER EIGHT WHO WILL CONTINUE TO RELY HEAVILY ON IMPORTS WOULD BE UNLIKELY TO SUIT UK. TWO FACTS UNDERLINING THIS ARE INABILITY OF EC TO MAKE REAL PROGRESS ON A COMMON ENERGY POLICY AND INTENSE CONCERN VOICED ABOUT BRITAIN'S RIGHT TO CONTROL NORTH SEA OIL DURING REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN. HMG WAS ABLE TO GIVE ASSURANCE ABOUT THIS THEN AND CALLAGHAN'S STATEMENT FOLLOWS THROUGH. TIMES WENT ON TO SAY ANY EC AGREEMENT ON A MANDATE WOULD BE LIKELY SIMPLY TO COVER UP DIVERGENCIES WHICH EXIST. THIS SAID, IT IS PARTICULARLY VITAL THAT UK BE INCLUDED IN ENERGY COMMISSION WHICH WILL BE SET UP AFTER THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE. TIMES ADMITS PROBLEMS ARE POSED FOR FRANCE, GERMANY, ITALY, NETHERLANDS AND OTHERS AND SUGGESTS COMPROMISE MIGHT BE TO HAVE UK, FRANCE, GERMANY REPRESENTED IN OWN RIGHT WITH COMMUNITY PRESENCE IN FORM OF ITALIAN CHAIRMAN FOR OTHER SIX EC MEMBERS.

3. FINANCIAL TIMES EDITORIAL "MR. CALLAGHAN OUT ON A LIMB" SAYS DONSEC IS PLAYING A DANGEROUS GAME. HIS STATEMENT IS A BLOW TO JOINT EC FOREIGN POLICY AND TO CONSUMER-PRODUCER DIALOGUE ITSELF WHICH POSSIBLY COULD PROCEED WITHOUT BRITAIN'S PARTICIPATION. ACKNOWLEDGING LITERAL TRUTH OF STATEMENT THAT HIS POSITION IS NOT NEW, FINANCIAL TIMES NOTES THAT CALLAGHAN SHOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DROP THE GO-SLOW APPROACH TO EC WITH REFERENDUM BEHIND HIM. WHILE CALLAGHAN MAY CLAIM DIALOGUE WILL NOT BE ABOUT FOREIGN POLICY BUT ABOUT ENERGY, THIS IS SPURIOUS SINCE IT HAS ALREADY BECOME CLEAR ENERGY WILL BE DEALT WITH ONLY IN A VERY GENERAL AND PRELIMINARY WAY. FIRST COLLECTIVE DIALOGUE OF CONSUMERS AND PRODUCERS INEVITABLY WILL DO LITTLE MORE THAN START ON EXCHANGE OF VIEWS IN HOPE OF FINDING COMMON GROUND FOR DISCUSSION TO BEGIN. BRITISH ATTITUDE JEOPARDIZES ARRANGEMENTS ALREADY MADE AND IF UK UNCLASSIFIED

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PRESSES AHEAD WITH ITS DEMAND THERE IS A POSSIBILITY BRITAIN WILL NOT BE REPRESENTED AT ALL -- A SURPRISING THOUGHT WHEN MNE CONSIDERS THE GREAT INTEREST HMG HAS SHOWN IN NON-ENERGY PART OF DIALOGUE. IN SHORT, CALLAGHAN HAS GONE OUT ON A LIMB SO UNNECESSARILY -- THE CARDINAL ERROR OF DIPLOMACY. BEST AND SIMPLEST COURSE IS FOR HIM TO REVERSE HIS POSITION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

RICHARDSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ENERGY, PRESS COMMENTS, EXPORTERS, IMPORTERS, MEETINGS, MEETING DELEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LONDON15709
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750353-1005
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751062/aaaaccxs.tel
Line Count: 116
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 OCT 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 OCT 2003 by buchantr>; APPROVED <18 FEB 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: UK DEMAND FOR SEPARATE REPRESENTATION AT CON- SUMER-PRODUCER CONFERENCE: BRITISH PRESS REACTION
TAGS: ENRG, PFOR, UK, EEC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006